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What Have We Learned...

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Tony Gallagher, Queen's University Belfast (October 27, 2015, Edinburgh)

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ...

The end of academic selection?



1973 - Advisory Council on Education



1976 - Labour Direct Rule Minister



2001 - Burns Report



2002 - Minister of Education



2006 - Education Order



2008 – Ministerial decision on 11+ tests

NI research into the effects of selective education (Gallagher and Smith, 2000)

Primary schools

- Test preparation
- Disrupted 'normal' curriculum
- Test results affected by social background

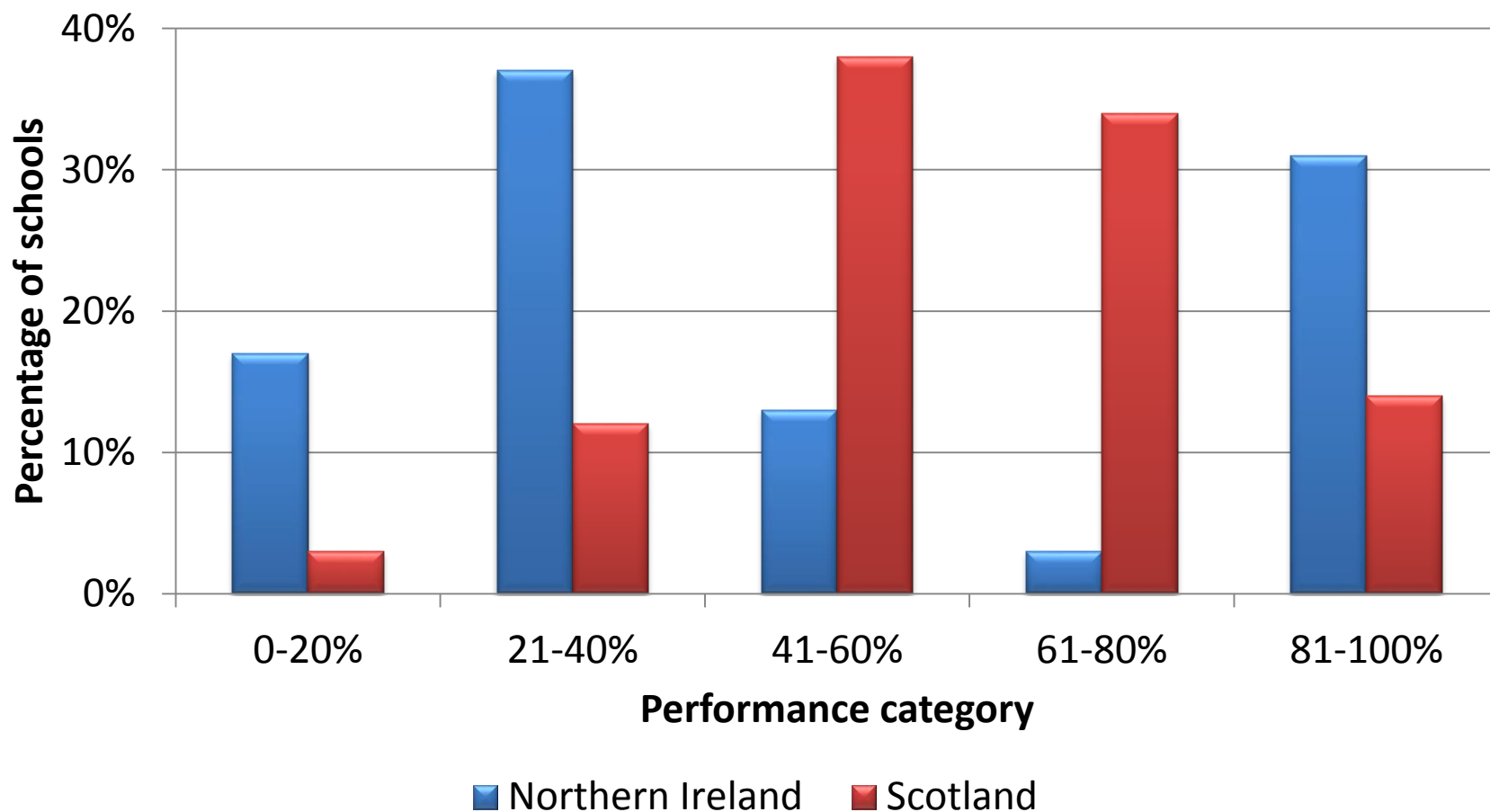
Post primary schools

- Social patterns to school access
- Bipolar pattern of performance
 - High achieving grammars
 - Long tail of low achievement

Education

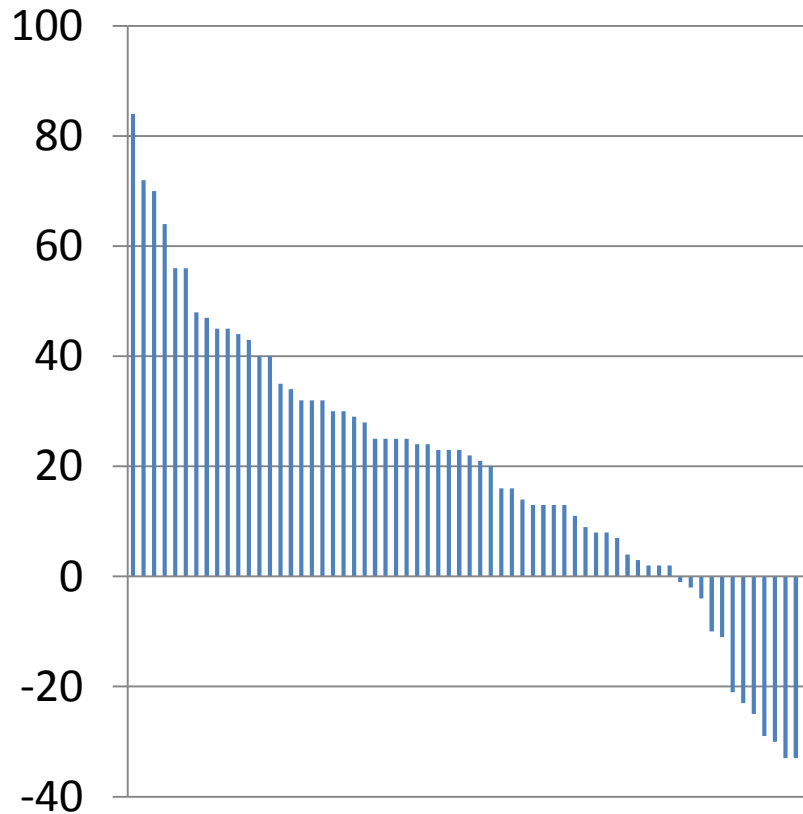
- Perceptions of system mediated by location
- Divides pupils, parents and teachers

School leaver patterns Northern Ireland & Scotland (1990s)

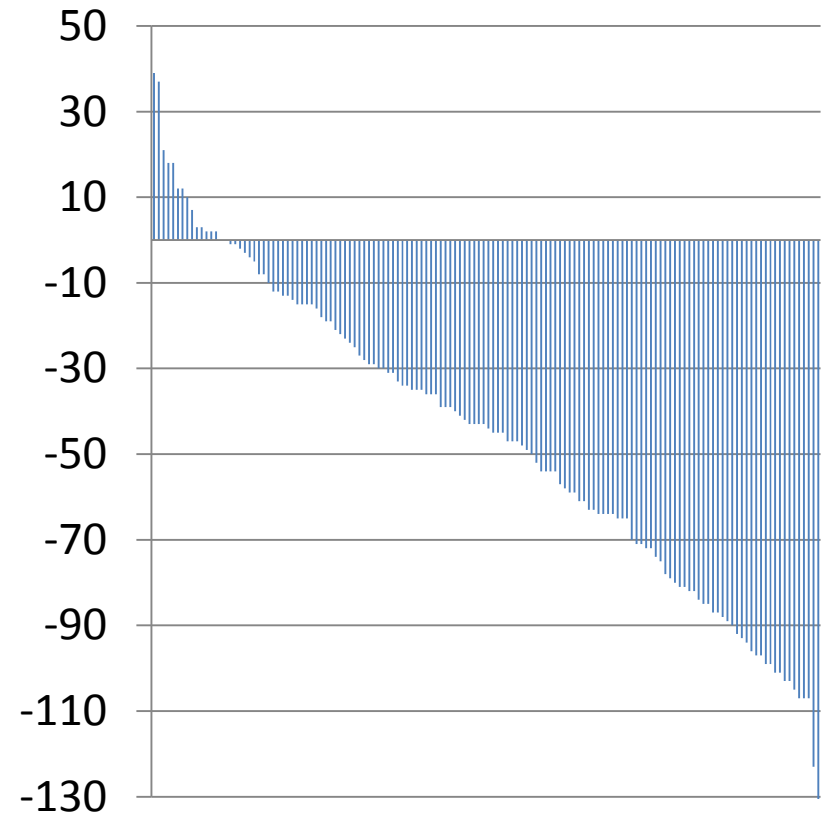


2013 transfer preferences: difference between 1st preferences & places

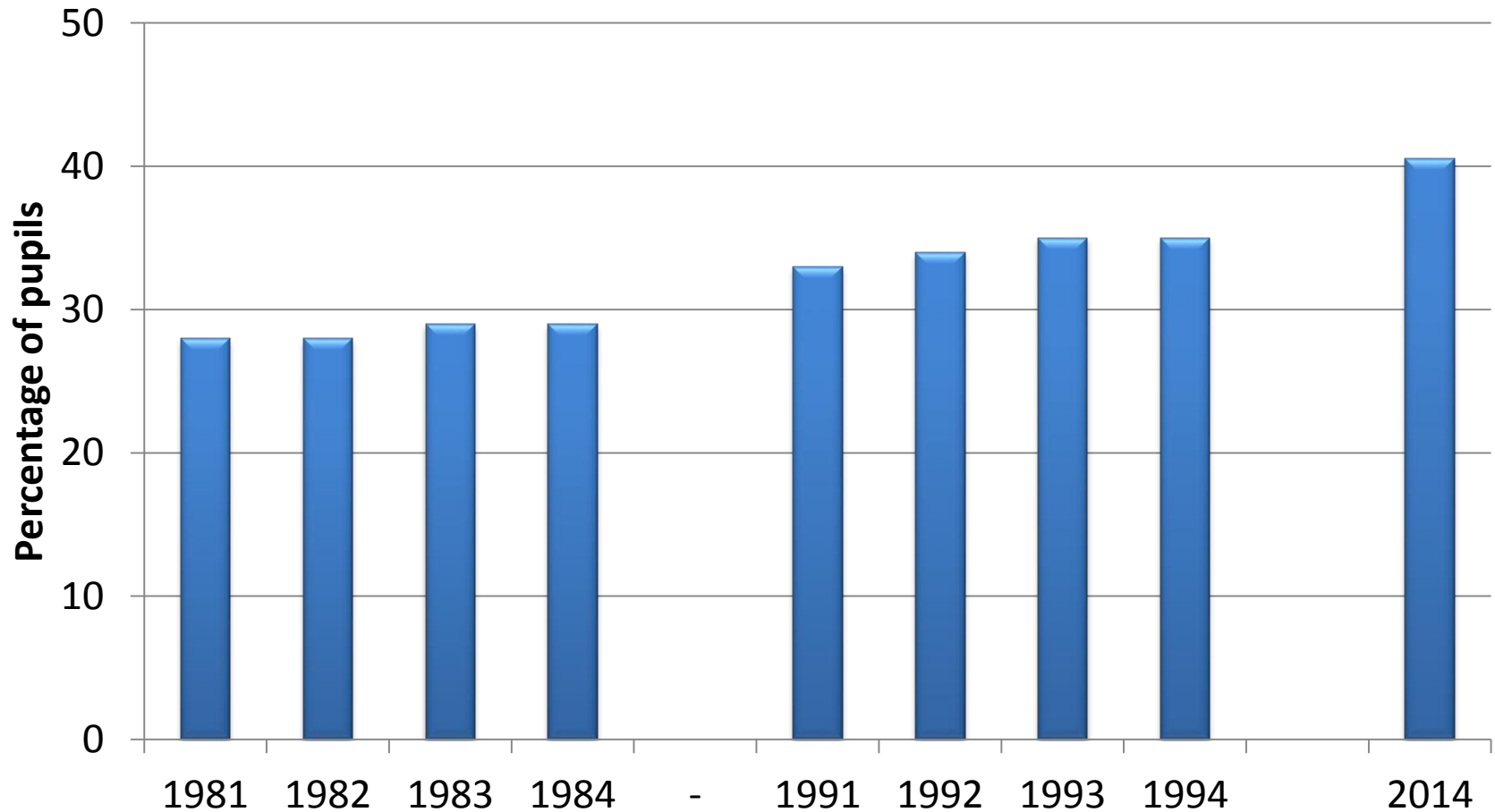
Grammar schools



Secondary schools

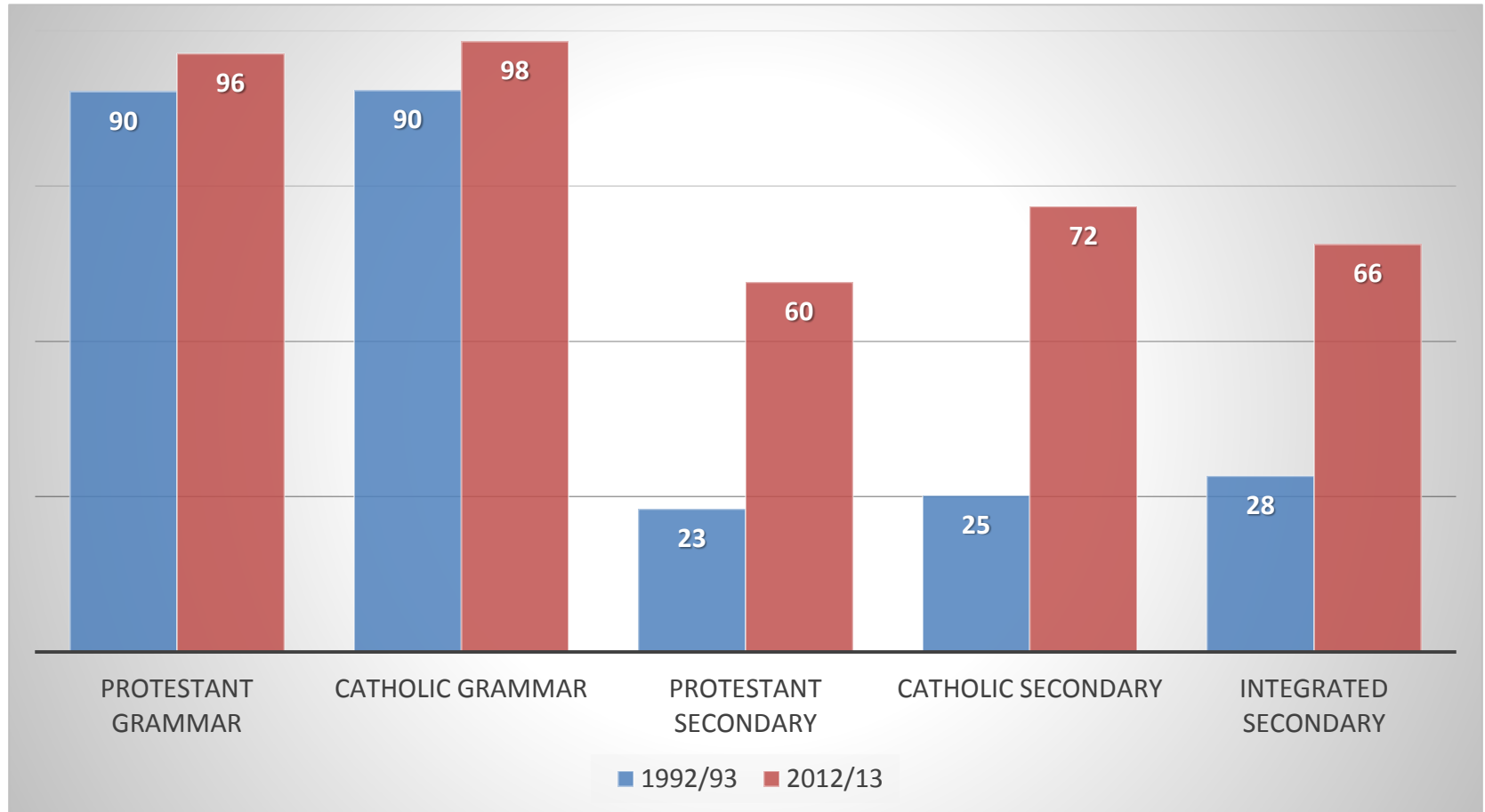


% of pupils entering grammar schools

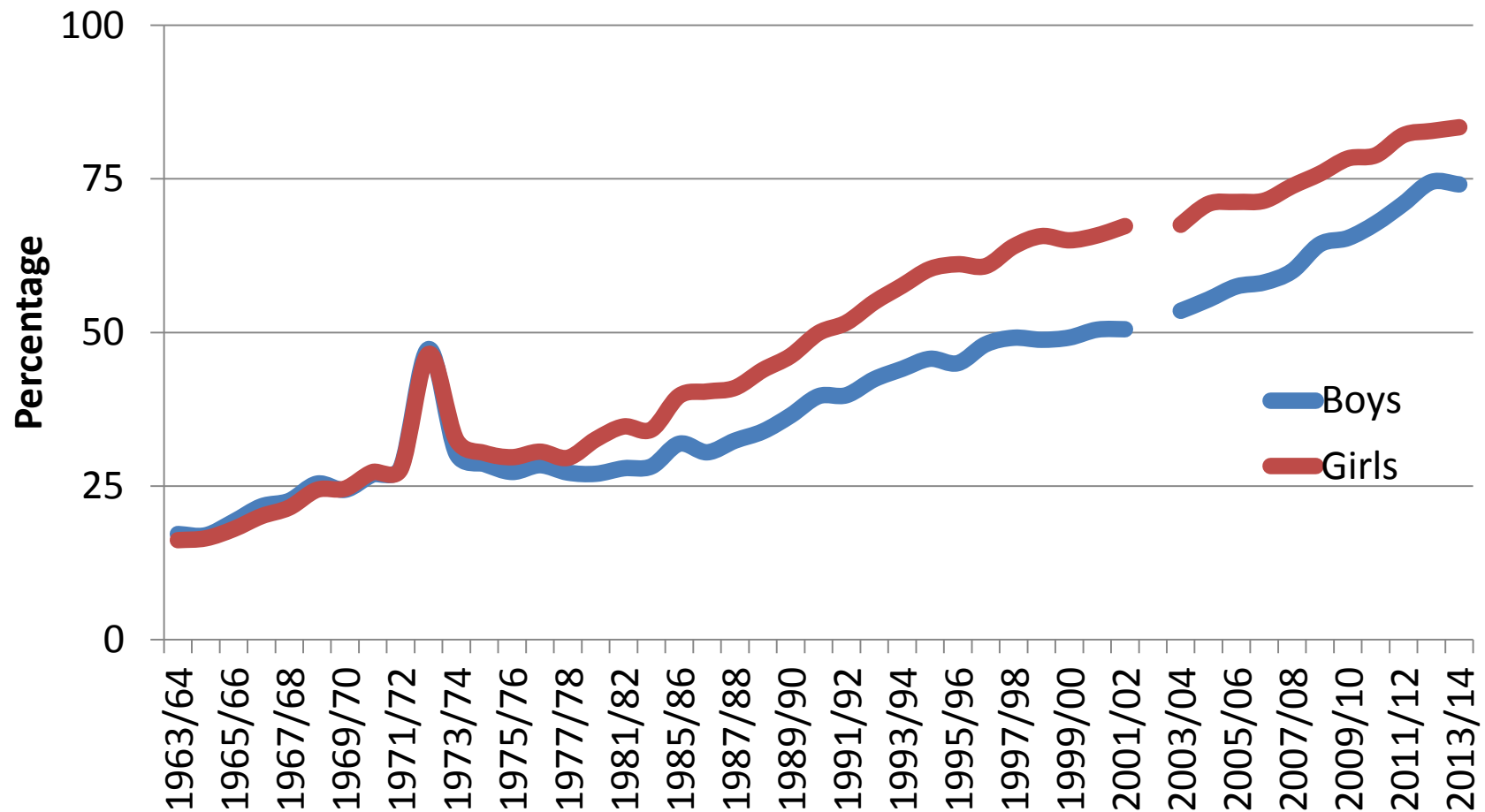


Performance change 1992/93 & 2012/13

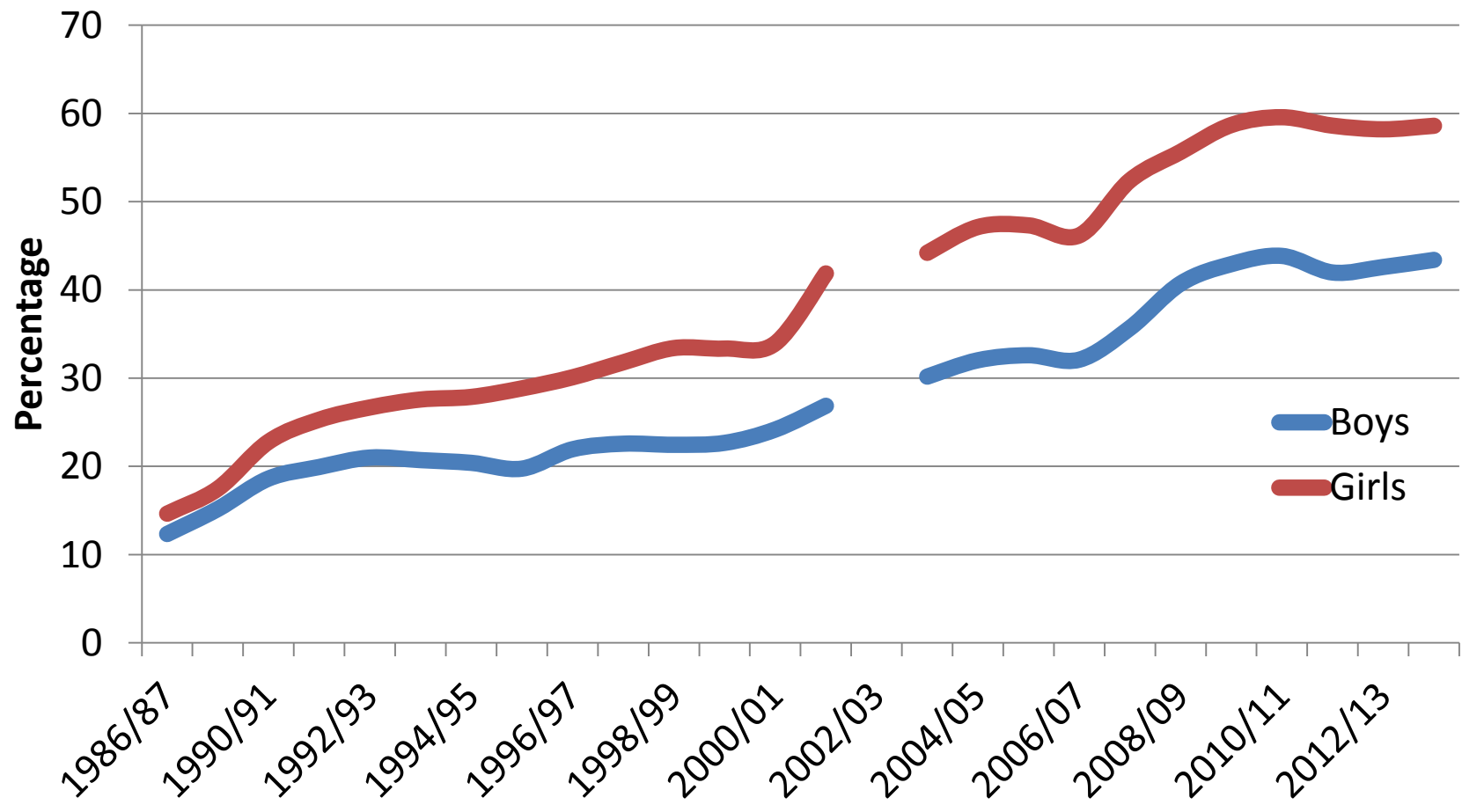
% Year 12 pupils with 5+ good GCSEs



% school leavers with 5+ good GCSEs 1963/64 to 2013/14

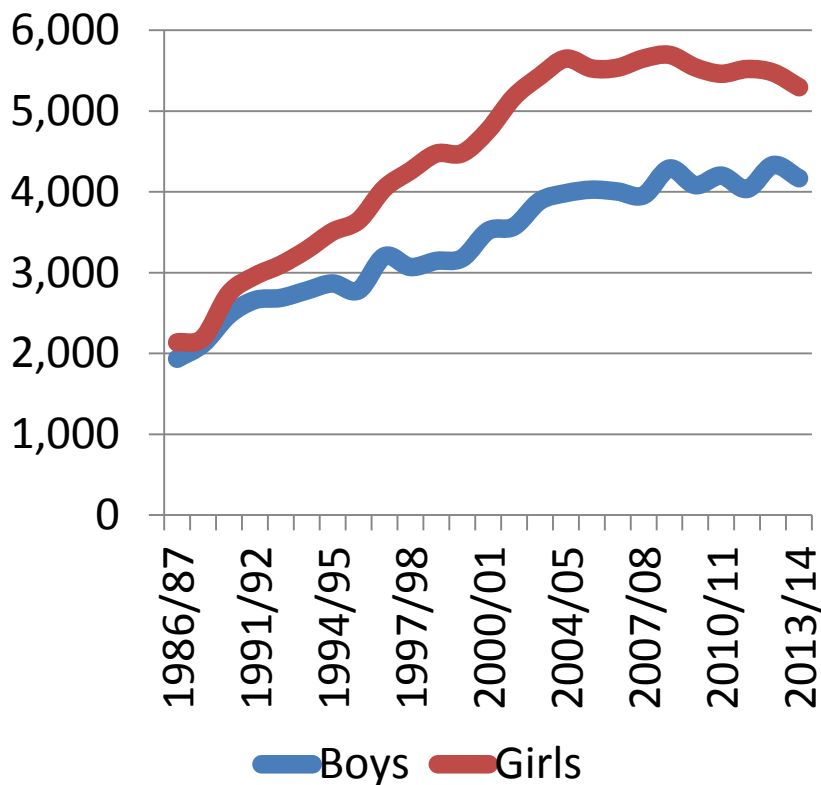


% school leavers with 3+ A Levels, 1986/87 to 2013/14

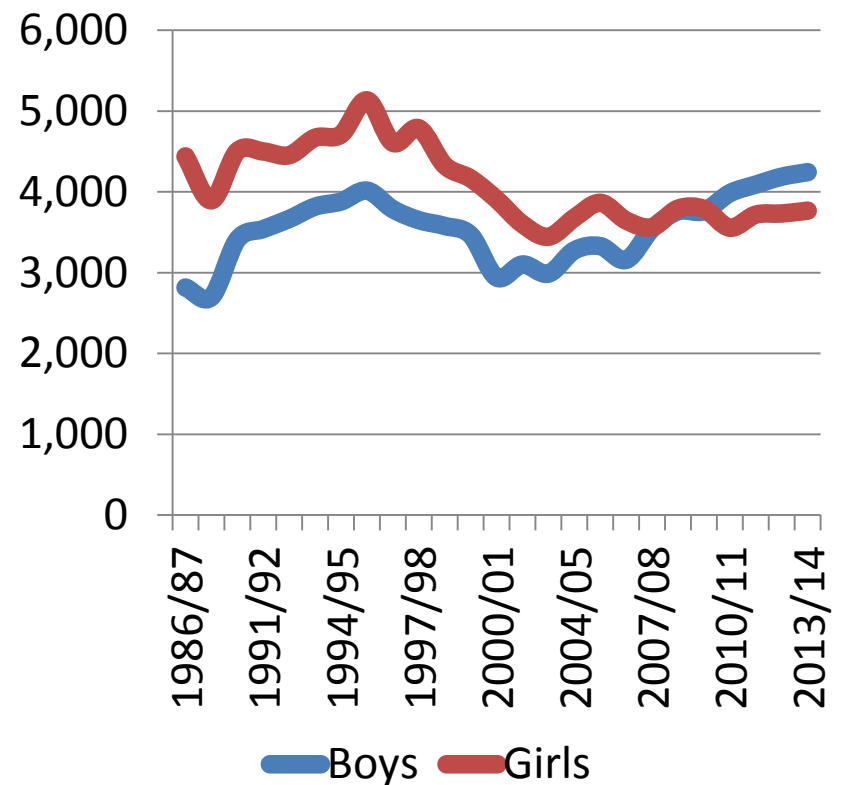


Number of school leavers 1986/87 to 2013/14 entering ...

... higher education

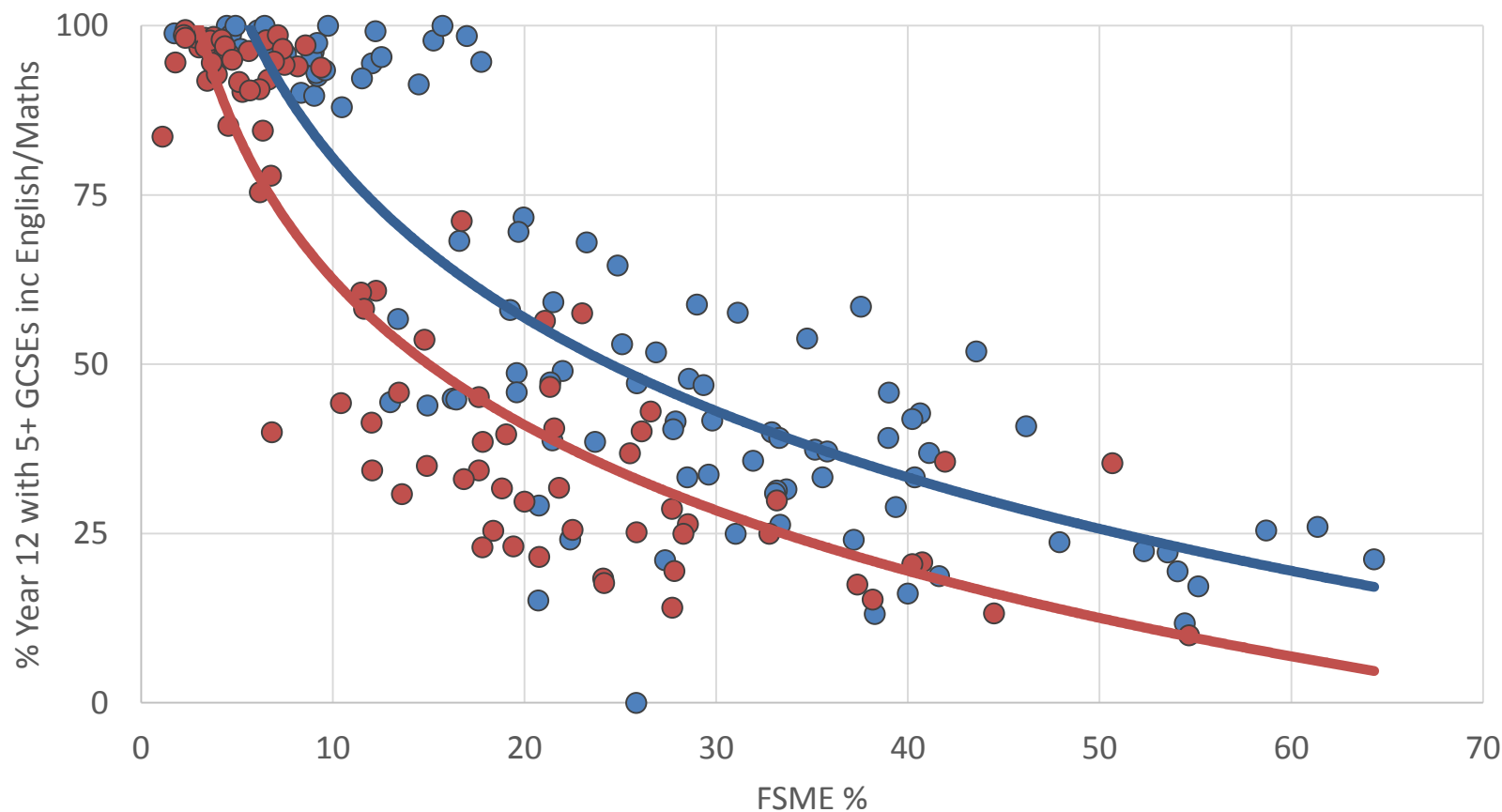


... further education

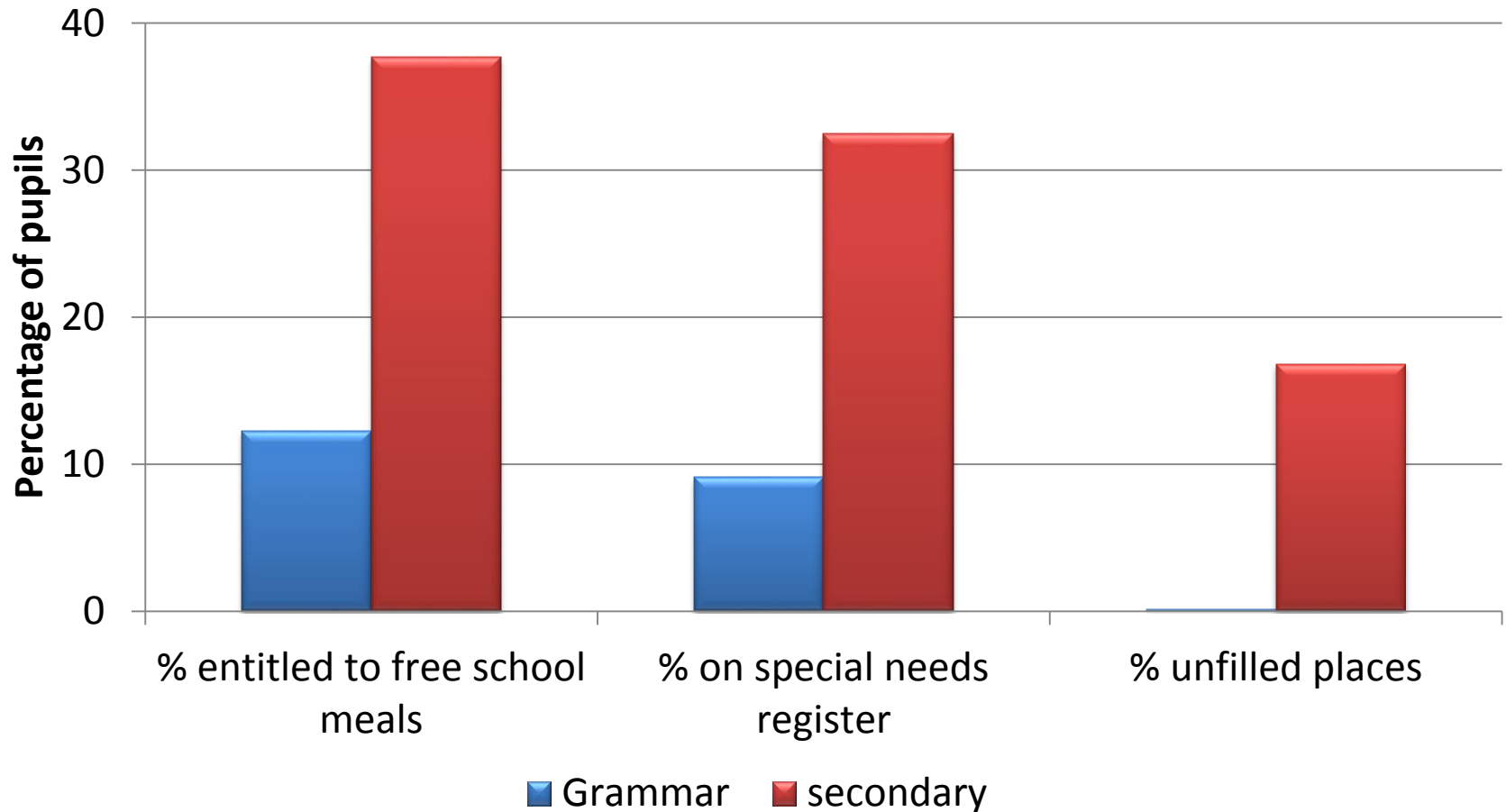


School performance, 2012/13, by sector:

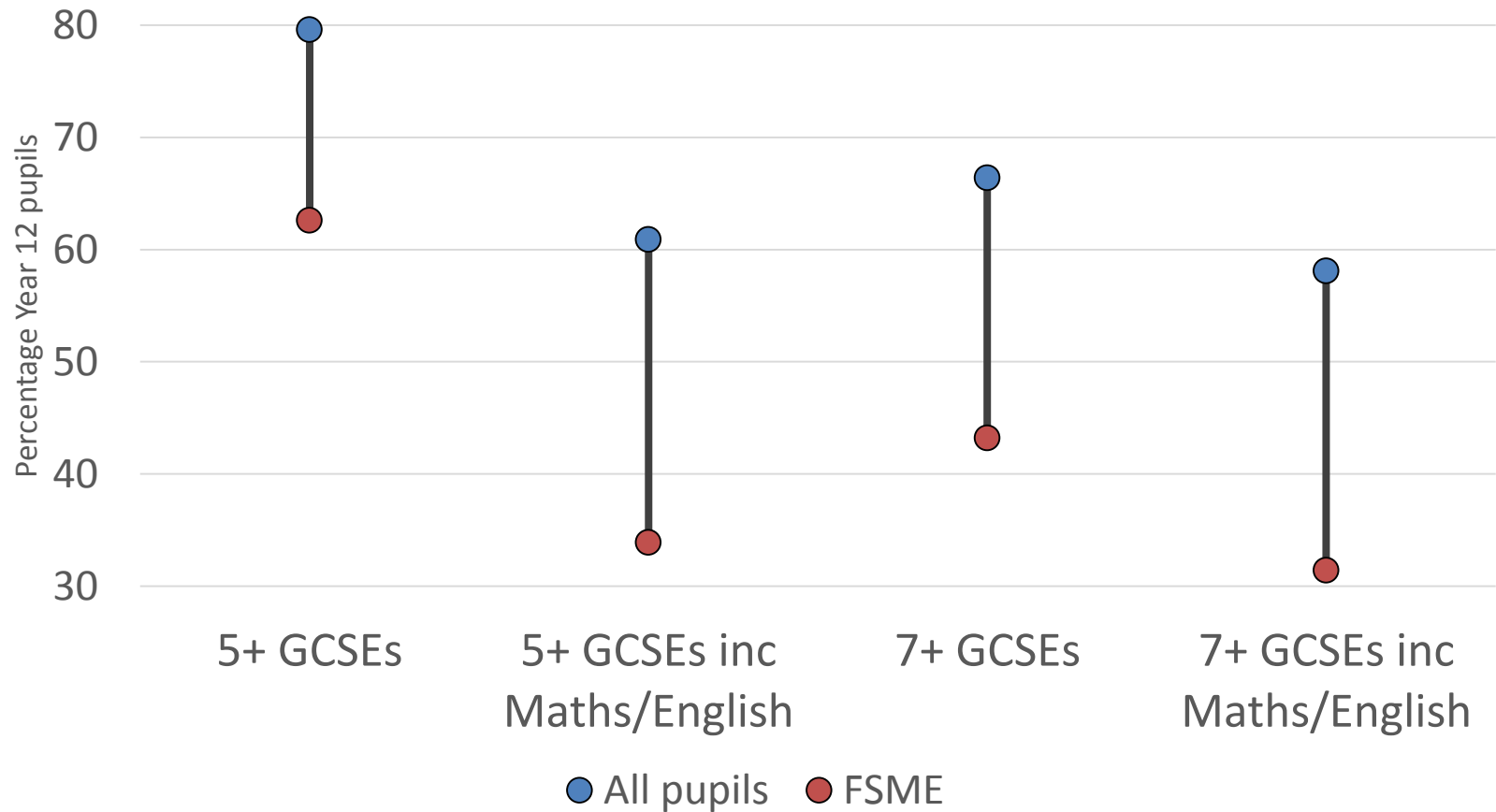
% Year 12 with 5+ good GCSEs inc. Maths/English



Social patterns, grammar & secondary schools, 2014/15



Social achievement gaps: all pupils, 2012/13



Speaking notes 1

- Fairness at the heart of the discussion
 - in NI attempt to suggest that fairness and excellence were add-offs
 - PISA evidences suggests this is not so, that fairness and excellence are both possible
- Strong theme to the book - balancing liberty, equality and fraternity
- Comprehensive approach originally based on a number of core principles:
 - Localism
 - uniformity
- The consequences of moving away from these foundational principles

Speaking notes 2

- How do you deal with the challenge that not all children come to school from the same position
- And how do you deal with the challenge that the outcomes from school are not equally valued
- Challenge one: the challenge of social background and the consequences of social disadvantage
 - not just an educational problem
 - not something that can be solved by schools alone
 - principle of fraternity important as it emphasizes the role of community
- Challenge two: the challenge of unequal outcomes, and their impact particularly on post-compulsory education
 - the relative status of academic and vocational qualifications
 - getting beyond a narrow focus on qualifications alone

Speaking notes 3

- Interesting ideas:
 - wider range of pathways
 - graduation certification
 - recognising much wider range of contributions
- In NI approaching this a different way:
 - diversity an inevitable part of the system - grammar and secondary, also Protestant, Catholic and integrated, Irish medium
 - see schools as an interdependent network, not a system of autonomous units
 - look for networked solutions
 - schools having some degree of responsibility for all the young people in the area where it is based, not just the young people in the school
- Neil Postman - The end of education
 - focus on the social role of US public schools
 - education is a constantly evolving system trying to help build a cohesive society
 - the ways in which this is done changes over time

Speaking notes 4

- Civic conversation
 - the need for a more coherent sense of what Scotland wants from education
 - individual mobility
 - human capital
 - social cohesion
 - cultural capital
- Agreed goals and agreed criteria
 - not criteria for diversity
 - criteria for education, against which implementation of diversity would be tested